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Office of the Circuit Executive · 95 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 · (415) 355-8800 · (415) 355-8901 Fax

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: David J. Madden (415) 355-8800

White House Announces Nominees for Northern District of California Judgeships

SAN FRANCISCO – The White House has announced President Obama’s nominations of a California state court judge and a federal magistrate judge to serve as district judges on the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. The nominations, which require Senate confirmation, were announced January 20.

Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Lucy H. Koh was nominated to a judgeship vacant since March 2, 2009, when U.S. District Judge Ronald M. Whyte took senior status. Magistrate Judge Edward M. Chen was re-nominated to fill a judgeship vacant since April 4, 2008, when U.S. District Judge Martin J. Jenkins resigned to accept appointment to the California Courts of Appeal.

Judge Koh, 41, was appointed to the Santa Clara County bench in 2008 by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Prior to becoming a judge, she had been a litigation partner since 2002 in the Palo Alto office of McDermott, Will and Emery, practicing appellate, commercial and criminal law, intellectual property, and litigation. Prior to that, she was a senior associate at Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati from 2000 to 2002.

Judge Koh served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California in Los Angeles from 1997 to 2000. She also had worked as a special assistant to the U.S. deputy attorney general from 1996 to 1997, and as a special counsel, U.S. Department of Justice, from 1994 to 1996.

Judge Koh received her undergraduate degree from Harvard University in 1990 and her J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1993.

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Judge Koh has been a member of the board of directors of the Korean American Bar Association of Northern California. She also has been an active member of the Asian American Bar Association and has served as a board member of the Asian Pacific Bar Association of Silicon Valley.

Judge Chen, 56, who sits in San Francisco, has served as a magistrate judge of the Northern District of California since 2001 and was recently reappointed by judges of that court to a second eight-year term. Prior to coming onto the federal bench, he worked as a staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, Northern California chapter, from 1985 to 2001, and as an associate at the San Francisco firm of Coblentz, Cahen, McCabe & Breyer from 1982 to 1985.

Judge Chen received his undergraduate degree from the University of California at Berkeley in 1975, and his J.D. from Boalt Hall School of Law in 1979. After law school, he served judicial clerkships for U.S. District Judge Charles B. Renfrew of the Northern District of California, and U.S. Circuit Judge James R. Browning of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Judge Chen was first nominated by President Obama on August 6, 2009. The nomination was not acted upon by the Senate during the session. Under Senate rules, nominations not acted upon during the session are returned to the President and cannot be considered unless made again by the President.

The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California had 6,694 case filings in 2008. The court is authorized 14 judgeships, three of which are currently vacant.

Federal district court judges, appointed under Article III of the Constitution, are nominated by the president, confirmed by the Senate and serve lifetime appointments upon good behavior. Their current annual salary is \$174,000.

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